



The Gastineau Channel Historical Society's compelling presentation during the October conference focused on the Treadwell Mine. This photo, from around 1915, looks northwest toward the mine complex, with Douglas on the left and downtown Juneau beneath Mount Juneau. Photo by Case and Draper, a commercial photo company, courtesy of the State Historical Library Historical Collections.

Dual-themed annual conference well received

It appears we're getting the hang of this digital conference business! This year's Alaska Historical Society annual conference ran even more smoothly than last year's debut effort.

In 2021, with travel and conferences still curtailed by Covid, the AHS Board decided it would be wise and most practical to do another digital conference. Since our venue was in virtual space instead of a real host community, we devised the theme "Communities Remembered and Imagined" and invited Tom Kizzia as the keynote speaker.

Tom was an appropriate choice, as he has recently completed a book on the Kennecott Mine in its ghost town years, after the mine closed in 1938 and before the National Park Service obtained the property in the 1980s. A strong second theme was

commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Spreading the conference over two weeks allowed for a single track of sessions instead of forcing attendees to choose between simultaneous sessions. There were 29 presentations, divided into 10 sessions, in addition to three panel discussions and a workshop.

Thank you to all presenters and moderators for excellent sessions! All were recorded and are now available to be viewed through the AHS website. A total of 119 people registered for the conference.

The digital venue allowed us to charge a minimum fee, \$50. In addition, the Society received a \$7,500 grant through the Alaska Humanities Forum and National Endowment for the Humanities, to make up for lost conference revenue last year and this year due to the Covid epidemic. It is

greatly appreciated.

In addition to myself, the AHS Conference Committee included Will Schneider, Karen Brewster, Jo Antonson, Patuk Glenn, Carol Gales, Tim Troll and Mike Hawfield. Many thanks to Karen for her work as the Zoom host of the conference, which included serving as the host of every session. We are also grateful to Carol Gales for design and layout of the print program.

Traditionally at the end of the annual conference, a local historical society offers to host the next conference of the Alaska Historical Society. This year, we are still considering whether we will need to meet digitally next year. We hope to go back to meeting in person, but the Board will assess Covid conditions in 2022 and make a decision.

—Rachel Mason,
Conference Committee Chair

Elevating public discourse, historical accuracy on agenda

A few weeks ago, I spotted a short news story about the passing of former U.S. Sen. Max Cleland of Georgia. Normal-



ly I would have scanned the story and turned the page, except the brief time I met Senator Cleland has remained with me forever.

In 1968, then Army Capt. Cleland was a month from completing

his tour in Vietnam when he found himself in the devastating battle of Khe Sanh. While setting up a radio communications site, a hand grenade exploded, shredding both his legs and right arm, requiring their amputation.

Thirty-six years later, Cleland was in Alaska and I was honored to be among the crowd gathered to hear him. Cleland recalled that it was his second visit to Alaska; the first was in a medical transport plane evacuating him from Vietnam. When it landed at Elmendorf Air Force Base and the cargo doors opened, Cleland, then 25, said he vividly remembered the cold Alaska wind blow away the sheet covering his maimed body.

Cleland earned numerous awards for valorous action in combat and went on to win a Senate seat in his home state. Running for re-election in 2002, his opponent had the temerity to question his patriotism, perhaps a precursor to the type of vicious and historically inaccurate public discourse we've witnessed of late in Alaska and nationally.

As I step into the big shoes of outgoing Alaska Historical Society President Will Schneider, I've been especially proud of the Society's efforts to elevate our public understanding of history. A year ago when much of the country was debating the merits of celebrating proponents of the Confederate cause in the Civil War, the AHS advocated putting historical events and figures in proper context, debating both the good

and the bad, and broadening the historical knowledge of Alaskans.

More recently, when the Alaska Jewish Museum was vandalized with swastikas and some Anchorage residents compared wearing a Covid mask to Jews targeted by the Nazis in the 1930s and '40s, the Society reacted strongly and quickly.

"We recognize that acts of anti-Semitic vandalism and the misappropriation of Nazi-era iconography display not only a gross misuse of history but also a deep-seated ignorance and maliciousness that we must dedicate ourselves to address and eradicate," our statement said.

As we fulfill the basic mission of the Society—to promote and preserve Alaska history—I hope we can serve as a force to improve the public discourse in our democracy. We've already identified many specific steps:

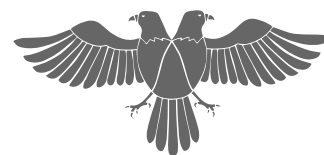
- Working with Alaska public schools to ensure their history curriculum is accurate and inclusive;
- Encouraging the University of Alaska to offer more Alaska studies and history courses for teachers;
- Protecting Alaskans' access to historical records;
- Advocating that Alaska Native place names are widely adopted at key public locations such as airports and large meeting spaces to advance the understanding of Alaska Native cultures and languages.

As AHS president, I'll ask our board to explore these initiatives and others because there has rarely been a more compelling time to try to repair our public discourse and historical understanding. We welcome your suggestions.

Across the nation, historical groups are gearing up to mark America's "semiquincentennial," the 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4, 2026. Already, the AHS is exploring how Alaska can participate. I know of no more important way to celebrate 250 years of our democracy than advancing Alaskans' understanding of our history to enlighten our public discourse.

Rest in peace, Capt. Cleland.

—David Ramseur



ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Ramseur, *President*
Anchorage

Rachel Mason, *Vice-President*
Anchorage

Erik Johnson, *Treasurer*
Denali Park

Angela Schmidt, *Secretary*
Fairbanks

Karen Brewster, *Fairbanks*
Carol Gales, *Nome*

Patuk Glenn, *Eagle River*

J. Pennelope Goforth, *Anchorage*

Ian Hartman, *Anchorage*

Mike Hawfield, *Homer*

Averil Lerman, *Anchorage*

Sara Piasecki, *Anchorage*

Rebecca Poulson, *Sitka*

Wendy Ranney, *Cordova*

William Schneider, *Past President*
Fairbanks

STAFF & SUPPORT

Jo Antonson, *Executive Director*

Ross Coen, *Editor, Alaska History*

David Ramseur, *Editor,*
Alaska History News

Judy Bittner, *Chief, State of Alaska,*
Office of History and Archaeology

Patience Frederiksen, *Director,*
State of Alaska, Division of Libraries,
Archives and Museums

GET IN TOUCH

We welcome your letters, news and photos. Send them to:

P.O. Box 100299

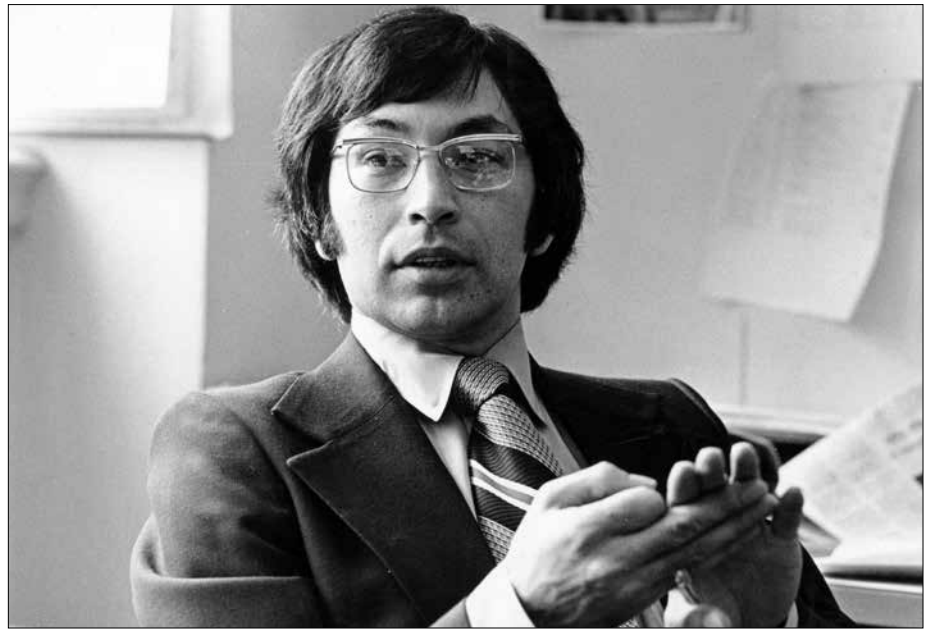
Anchorage, AK 99510-0299

Phone: 907-276-1596

members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org

www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org

or find us on Facebook



Emil Notti (left) and Willie Hensley, pictured here during the land claims effort, participated in ANCSA panels on Oct. 14 as part of the Alaska Historical Society 2021 conference. Notti photo: Alaska State Library, P33-11, Native Organizations Photo Collection. Hensley photo: Alaska State Library, Willie Hensley-1, Alaska State Library Photo Collection.

Claims Act 50th anniversary boosted by focus on Native leaders, comprehensive research guide

The Alaska Historical Society's initiative to mark the 50th anniversary of the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was significantly advanced in recent weeks.

A major focus of the Society's 2021 annual conference focused on the fascinating run-up to the act's passage, featuring Native leaders who played key roles in its creation and success.

Meanwhile, the Society's massive master guide to sources about the claims act is advancing from the annotating sources stage to formatting a more than 700-page document for use by researchers and historians.

An entire day (Oct. 14) of this year's virtual conference focused on the claims act with three panels of experts. Emil Notti and Sam Kito opened the sessions under moderation by journalist Meghan Sullivan to discuss ANCSA's early history. Society board member Patuk Glenn moderated the next panel featuring claims act pioneers Oliver Leavitt and Willie Hensley.

A final panel featured historians Phil Wight, Daniel Monteith and Steve Haycox discussing the implications of the act and its effect on other Alaska issues, such as the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

Anniversaries like ANCSA's 50th are a reminder to remember not only what happened, but why and how. Native elders in

the ANCSA panels shared stories of how this period is remembered by those who made it such an important part of their lives.

It was striking to hear them describe the important role personal connections played in the movement. Such stories might get lost in time, but conference participants had the rare privilege to hear them directly from the actual participants.

For example, Notti discussed how he and other Native leaders such as Laura Bergt, Willie Hensley and John Borbridge traveled across the country to build support for the claims act. One of Notti's visits was with the World Council of Churches where he was asked to address a huge crowd of religious officials.

"There were 10,000 preachers in that hall as far as I could see to the back of the room," Notti recalls. "Someone got a microphone and said, 'Before we endorse we should know what is in the bill.' And the man I had dinner with the night before stood up and said, 'What do we care what's in the bill? If it is what the Native people want we should endorse it.'"

"So the National Council of Churches endorsed us and their claim was that they could talk to 10,000 preachers any Sunday morning and they would be talking to 40 million Americans, telling them to write

their congressmen."

The Society's guide to sources on ANCSA, being ably managed by board member Karen Brewster, will contain six sections. It opens with an introduction explaining the scope of the project and how the guide is organized. A second section lists collections by archive or holding institution.

A third section describes content of collections at each site that relate to ANCSA. This section is indexed down to the box and folder level when possible and is meant to give researchers a path to content that relates to their area of interest.

The fourth section is an annotated bibliography of sources in published or printed form in library holdings. A fifth section is a listing of key players in the ANCSA movement with brief descriptions of each person's role.

The guide's final section is a compilation of curricula that have been developed over the years with a listing of key discussion topics for educators teaching this topic.

With December 18 the 50th anniversary, we hope to have a product available at that time on Scholarworks. The guide will also be available electronically on the Alaska Historical Society website and will be updated as long as grant funding permits.

—William Schneider

In memorium: AHS recognizes Alaskans passed who contributed enormously to our state

Editor's note: At its annual conference, the Alaska Historical Society celebrated the lives of Alaskans who died during the year who contributed to our state's history and betterment. Enormous thanks to Ron Inouye and Sue Sprinkle for compiling these summaries of lives well lived.



TREFON ANGASAN, JR. (1947-2020) This Alutiiq elder and leader succumbed to complications of Covid-19. He lived a subsistence lifestyle and worked summers in the Alaska Packer's regional canneries. He was active in passage of ANCSA and ANILCA and advocated for restoration of subsistence rights in Katmai National Park for Native descendants of the 1912 Novarupta volcanic explosion.



RITA BLUMENSTEIN (1936-2021) A traditional Yup'ik healer and spiritual leader, she grew up in Tununak listening to stories and learning traditional skills. Her traditional healing skills were acknowledged by medical practitioners and the South-central Foundation certified her as the first Alaska tribal doctor. As an elder, Blumenstein joined a community of indigenous

healers and culture bearers, the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, which represents a global alliance for prayer, education and healing for Mother Earth.



NEAL BROWN (1938-2021) A physicist and consummate bottle rocket guru, Brown knew his polar atmospheric science and enjoyed teaching kids and adults about science. He became the first director (1971-1989) of the UAF Poker Flat Research Range in 1971 where global researchers launched more than 219 rockets. In retirement he developed

the Alaska Space Grant Camp where young people built and launched model rockets.



ROBERT CHARLIE (1927-2020) Born at a Minto Flats muskrat camp, he lived a subsistence Athabascan lifestyle and taught himself to read and write. He worked as postmaster, water treatment specialist, but was most proud of his work on the Alaska Railroad steamships *Alice*, *Yukon* and *Nenana*, hauling Yukon River freight. Charlie was a delegate to the first Tanana Chiefs Conference.



TERRENCE COLE (1953-2020) This raconteur and UAF history professor analyzed, documented and most significantly shared his infectious passion for Alaska and polar history. Through teaching and writing he shone a spotlight on Alaska public history. A believer in a broad liberal arts education, Cole urged students to question their assumptions, think critically, and develop

analytical writing skills. He mentored hundreds of students as a thoughtful and kind individual.



"MIKE" GRAVEL (1930-2021)

Born into a Massachusetts family of French-Canadian immigrants, Maurice Mike Gravel came to Alaska in 1956. With a career in Anchorage real estate, he was elected to the State House in 1962, and served two terms (1969-1981) as an Alaska U.S. senator during the ANCSA and Trans-Alaska oil pipeline legisla-

tion period and post-ANCSA creation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. Better known outside Alaska for his 1971 reading to a Congressional subcommittee of the court-suppressed Vietnam war "Pentagon Papers," Gravel unsuccessfully sought the 1972 Democratic vice-presidency and the 2008 and 2019 U.S. presidency.



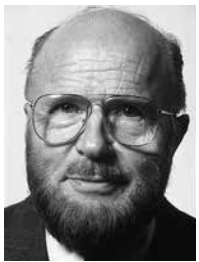
JOHN HAVELOCK (1932-2021) Born in Toronto, John moved to the U.S. at age 14, served in the U.S. Army, and obtained a Harvard University law degree in 1959. He then worked in the Alaska Department of Law and later in Anchorage was a founding partner of Ely, Guess, Rudd & Havelock law firm. Gov. Bill Egan named him attorney general in 1970, and he guided the

development of the state's positions on ANCSA, the first North Slope oil tax system, the state's first limited-entry fishing program, and subsequently the state's constitutional amendment on privacy. Havelock served as founding director of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Criminal Justice Center and legal studies program and was lead lawyer and director of the state commission investigating the Exxon Valdez oil spill.



KATIE HURLEY (1921-2021) Born in Juneau, Olga Katherine Torkelsen Alexander Hurley devoted her life to public service. She was secretary to Alaska Territorial Gov. Ernest Gruening, Chief Clerk of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and State Senate secretary. She was elected to the State House of Representatives from Wasilla. Hurley served as president of the

State Board of Education and executive director of the Alaska Women's Commission. She won the Democratic Lt. Governor primary nomination in 1978, the first woman ever to win a statewide election. She also served as executive director for the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women, State Board of Education, Alaska Commission for Human Rights, and Alaska Judicial Council.



"JAY" KERTTULA (1928-2020)

Jalmar "Jay" Kerttula represented Palmer in the state legislature and uniquely was House speaker and later Senate president. Popular and personable, he was re-elected and served intermittently for 30 years from 1961-1994. Part of the original Matanuska Valley Colony families, Kerttula and wife Joyce formed a team at home and in their

Juneau legislative office where he focused on legislation while she directed the office. He worked to ensure Alaska received its share of oil revenues and pursued issues of education and health care, Pioneer Homes, Alaska Marine Highway, purchase of the Alaska Railroad and anti-trust legislation.



ALBERT KOOKESH (1948-2021)

Angoon commercial fisherman, businessman, attorney and basketball player/fan, Kookesh operated the Kootznahoo Inlet Lodge and Angoon Market Center. He worked in the administrations of Governors Tony Knowles and Bill Walker, and served in the Alaska House of Representatives (1997-2005) and Senate (2005-2013).

Kookesh also served Kootznoowoo Inc., Sealaska Corp., Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Brotherhood, and Tlingit and Haida Central Council of Alaska. On the Sealaska Heritage Institute Board, he expanded the scholarship program, revitalized the Native language and culture programs and helped launch the Juneau biennial "Celebration."



"BOB" MITCHELL (1931-2021) Robert "Bob" Andrew Mitchell's second career brought him to Alaska as an architectural historian for the state Office of History and Archaeology. The Independence Mine and Rika's Roadhouse rehabilitations were among his major projects. He was active with Yale Alumni committees, the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation (now

Preservation Alaska), Friends of Nike Site Summit, the Alaska Chamber Singers, Anchorage Waterways Council, Friends of Anchorage Refuge and Opportunities for Lifelong Education.



KEN NAIL, JR. (1950-2021)

As the sixth Alaska State Archivist, Ken Nail served for five years and initiated efforts to begin electronic archival records (ASERA—Alaska State Electronic Records Archives). His long career as an archivist included the Kennedy Space Center, Montgomery County Alabama, and Alaska State Archives. He completed

his career as archivist and librarian at the University Medical Center Library in Jackson, MS.



LYLE D. PERRIGO (1930-2020)

With a specialty in corrosion science, Battelle Northwest assigned him to open an Alaska field office. He later became the associate director of the UA Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center followed by directing the Alaska Office of the Arctic Research Commission. Dedicated to public service, he served on the boards of the

Anchorage Museum, Cook Inlet Historical Society, and Alaska Genealogical Society. He and his wife Dalene Perrigo's papers are deposited in the archives at the UAA/APU Consortium Library.



"PAT" PLETNIKOFF (1948-2021)

Patrick "Pat" Swetzof Pletnikoff grew up on St. George Island in the Pribilof Islands. As an intern for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, he developed a self-government transition plan for the community from the federal government. He was appointed director of the Aleut League (later the Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association) in

Anchorage to successfully seek redress for the U.S. government's World War II relocation of Unangan from the Pribilof and Aleutian Islands to camps in Southeast Alaska. Pletnikoff returned to St. George Island, serving as mayor. Remembering the thriving populations of birds and fur seals of his childhood, he initiated efforts to rejuvenate those dwindling numbers through the establishment of a National Marine Sanctuary.



MILLIE RENKERT (1922-2021) Millie Waldie Renker transferred her 1945 FBI position in Washington, D.C. to Anchorage where she met and married Bob Renkert, settling into the small intimate community of Anchorage and raising a family. She became involved with community groups and organizations: the First Presbyterian Church, PEO Sisterhood, Anchorage

Symphony, Pioneers of Alaska, Anchorage Ski Club and Nordic Ski Club, and was a charter member of the Cook Inlet Historical Society. She and Bob were strong supporters of Sheldon Jackson College and Alaska Pacific University and historic preservation advocates. With her long community presence and social contacts, Millie assisted in compiling *Fond Memories of Anchorage Pioneers: Personal Histories*.



JOHN SACKETT (1944-2021) Born in a hunting camp on the Huslia River in the Interior, he was raised in the now relocated town of Cutoff, currently known as Huslia. As a child he became aware of the lack of medical care, transportation and public services in rural communities. At age 21, Sackett began his political career in the State House, the youngest person ever

elected to the Legislature. He served three years in the House and then 13 in the Senate (1973-1986). Sackett helped establish Doyon, Ltd., serving as its first president. He had served as president of the Tanana Chiefs Conference which provides social services to Interior communities. He participated in the establishment of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.



GLEN SIMPSON (1941-2020) This metalsmith artist was born in Atlin, British Columbia, to Canadian and Tahltan-Kaska Indian parents. Deeply aware of these shared roots, he mentored many students reinterpreting traditional and contemporary art themes and techniques. Simpson earned his metalsmithing degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology

and joined the UAF Art Department. Glen was particularly knowledgeable about tools made and used by the indigenous people of Interior and Southeast Alaska and Canada. His work combined metal, wood and bone in distinctive functional and visual designs.



FRANK SOOS (1950-2021) Retired UAF English professor (1986-2004) and Alaska State Writer Laureate (2014-2016), Soos guided many students through basic classes and mentored some of the state's best writers. He authored numerous books of essays, short stories and poems. He and English Department colleague Peggy Shumaker established the annual "Dead

Writers" series when words again came to life through recitation, costuming and fun. Tall and lanky with a soft, melodious southern twang, he was as comfortable out-of-doors on ski and bicycle trails as in the classroom.



CYNTHIA TOOHEY (1934-2021) This transplanted New Yorker lived a varied and full Alaskan life: Reeve Aleutian Airlines stewardess, emergency room nurse, Alyeska Ski Patrol room aide, tec-Medic on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and small business owner. Married to Barney Toohey, they settled in Girdwood to restore and successfully operate the historic Crow Creek Mine as a

small business. She was passionate about public service, serving on local government boards, in the State House of Representatives (1993-1996) and volunteering.



DIXIE WADDELL (1937-2020)

Long-time Eagle River Elementary School teacher, community leader and volunteer, Waddell was proactive for Chugiak. Upon retirement, she and husband Bill evolved the Rural Discount Center to bring food, clothing and furniture to the area. They restored the historic Spring Creek Lodge.

Dedicated to improving recreational opportunities she supported the Chugiak Dog Musers Inc., the Alaska Sled Dog Racing Assn. and the Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board. She was a member of the Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society, the Chugiak Area Business Association and organized numerous community events.



FRED WILLIAMS (1930-2021) This Fish and Game biologist of Copper Center drew upon his extensive knowledge of wildlife and human subsistence, geography and geology to share with others. Long associated with the George L. Ashby Memorial Museum at Copper Center, Williams worked on the rivers, glaciers and landscapes traversed by indigenous residents

and then by the 1898 gold seekers in the region. As a search and rescuer, his geographic knowledge was valuable. He served on the Copper Valley Electric board of directors for 49 years. Ironically his wife Hallie of 68 years died on January 26 and Fred on January 31.

Witness to Alaska political history developed affinity for Russia-Alaska citizen diplomacy

As the son of a career Marine, David Ramseur grew up no stranger to an active life on the move. His family traveled from coast to coast, giving Ramseur a wanderlust for new places and experiences. He recalls “lots of great childhood adventures, including being stuck in a sandstorm in Death Valley and encountering bears in the Smoky Mountains.” Well before he moved to Alaska, Ramseur appreciated its expansive beauty and sense of adventure.

Growing up primarily in California and North Carolina, David attained a bachelor's in political science from the University of North Carolina Asheville and a master's in journalism from the University of Missouri. His first job out of graduate school was as beat reporter at a newspaper in Greenville, S.C. But tiring of the South, Ramseur reconnected with a grad school friend who'd taken a position at the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*. Ramseur offered his services to the Fairbanks paper and thus began a long and productive career in Alaska in 1979. He covered the state legislature in Juneau and the national delegation in Washington, D.C.

After observing Alaska's politics for seven years as a reporter, Ramseur decided to participate more directly. He volunteered on Steve Cowper's 1986 gubernatorial campaign and upon his successful election, Ramseur was named press secretary. During the Cowper administration, Ramseur developed a keen interest in Alaska-Russian relations. He staffed his boss on the 1988 “Friendship Flight” between Nome and Provideniya, USSR, which connected long-separated Alaska Natives and their Russian counterparts.

Ramseur continued to cultivate his interest in Russia when he joined the administration of Tony Knowles in the 1990s, advancing to chief of staff. After a deadly earthquake struck eastern Russia in 1995, Ramseur helped organize Alaska's humanitarian response and urged the Knowles administration to partner more closely with Russia. After Knowles left office in 2002, Ramseur served as chief of staff for Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich and then



David Ramseur visits a signpost in Magadan, Russia, marking the community's sister-city relationship with Anchorage established in 1991.

in the same position for U.S. Sen. Begich after he won election in 2008.

Following Begich's re-election defeat in 2016, Ramseur dedicated himself to writing a book that reflected his deep knowledge and experience with Alaska-Russian relations, based on research and a dozen trips to Russia. The result was his well-re-

“Alaska gives people
the opportunity to really
live our history.”

ceived book, *Melting the Ice Curtain: The Extraordinary Story of Citizen Diplomacy on the Russian-Alaska Frontier*. Ramseur presented a dramatic narrative of how inspiration, courage and persistence by Alaskan and Russian citizen-diplomats stared down the Cold War to bridge a widening gap in superpower relations, a model sorely needed today, he says.

The University of Alaska Press published the book in June 2017. In addition

to *Melting the Ice Curtain*, Ramseur has published numerous articles about Russia in Alaska newspapers and with the Kennan Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based Russian think tank. He regularly delivers professional talks to the nation's military and various civic organizations on the topic.

Ramseur served as a visiting scholar in public policy at UAA's Institute of Social and Economic Research and board member of the Alaska World Affairs Council. In October, Ramseur was elected as president of the Alaska Historical Society. He believes that “Alaska gives people the opportunity to really live our history” and looks forward to leading the Society to increase the level of civic discourse and historical awareness among Alaskans.

When not researching Russia or Alaska history, Ramseur can be found training for a triathlon or working on his golf game. He lives in Anchorage with his spouse, attorney Susan Wibker. The Historical Society is grateful for his leadership and looks forward to his successful tenure as president.

—Ian Hartman

Students urged to explore state history for History Day projects

History groups aim to support students focused on Alaska, Native topics

Several state historical groups are joining forces to encourage Alaska middle and high school students to select Alaska-related research topics as they participate in the National History Day competition slated for April 2022.

The goal is a greater focus on Alaska's rich history as students gear up for the national competition under this year's theme: "Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences."

Each year across the nation, students produce research papers, documentaries, exhibits, performances or website material under the auspices of National History Day, branded in Alaska as Alaska History Day. In the 2020 national competition, Fairbanks West Valley High student Bonnie Marriott placed second in the exhibit category with "The Knights of Labor: Spreading Ideas of Equality and the Eight Hour Workday."

Recently, the Alaska Historical Society, Cook Inlet Historical Society and Alaska Humanities Forum

have been collaborating to build on their missions of promoting the study of Alaska and Alaska's archives. Alaska historians, librarians and archivists were asked to suggest Alaska history topics and they provided links to resources and collections featuring Alaska history.

Students can compete individually or as part of a group of up to five members. The first competition is at local school district levels and selected regional winners advance to the national contest. Due to continuing public health concerns, this year's regional and state competitions will be conducted virtually.

The national competition engages a half a million middle and high school students around the world in researching historical

topics over the course of the academic year. Hundreds of Alaska students normally participate.

But local historians believe there is not enough emphasis on Alaska history, especially Alaska Native history. Of 54 Alaska participants last year, only three researched topics related to Alaska. We hope to see that number increase.

"Engaging students with history at the middle and high school level is important if we want to cultivate engaged citizens," said William Schneider, anthropologist and past president of AHS.

With 2021 being the 50th commemoration of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, program boosters hope to motivate more students to take a deeper dive into the state's often neglected indigenous history.

Librarians hope students will utilize the vast online resources of SLED (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway) with its finding aids and primary source guides to fishing, whaling and military history.

The Alaska Humanities Forum, the in-state affiliate for National History Day, is following up on suggestions made last year to establish an advisory panel of

historians, educators, archivists and others to implement strategies to inspire students. The panel includes AHF youth coordinator Emily Lucy; UAA history professor Ian Hartman; Jennifer Romer, Anchorage School District social studies coordinator; Aaron Leggett, Anchorage Museum curator; and AHS board member Penelope Goforth.

Alaska history groups hope to raise funds to assist students who choose Alaska or Alaska Native history as their topic to help purchase exhibit materials, provide certificates and monetary awards and to make the trip to the final round in Washington, D.C.

—Penelope Goforth



Inspire a student for Alaska History Day!

What is National History Day? It is a program that provides a fun, educational experience that builds research, critical thinking, and presentation skills while providing students with a chance to create an independent project focused on a topic they care about, and compete with peers.

Who can participate? Students in grades 6-12 can compete individually or in teams of up to five. Each individual or team must have an adult sponsor in order to participate and register. This can be a teacher, librarian, or parent if the child is home schooled.

What are the competition categories? Documentary, exhibit, research paper, performance, and website.

What is the 2021-22 theme?

Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences.

When is National History Day?

The national contest is in June 2022.

When is Alaska History Day? The competition is set for April 2022.

What are some ideas for Alaska student research? State archivists have suggested a short list of research topics including:

- Statehood
- ANCSA
- Creation of the Permanent Fund Dividend
- Who were the Zobel's?
- Alaska Native rights and the first Tanana Chiefs Conference
- The politics of fishing and subsistence rights
- Wolf hunting
- Alaska's role in the World War II Lend Lease Act program.

Where can Alaska students find research resources? Visit this site: www.nhd.org/affiliate/alaska

Learn more about the state contest: www.akhf.org/ahd

Learn more about the national program: www.nhd.org/

Fly back in time at the Alaska Aviation Museum

Since aviation's infancy, it has played an outsized role in Alaska history. And there's no better place to learn about this than the Alaska Aviation Museum.

The museum, which opened in Anchorage in 1988, was the dream of founder Ted Spencer.

Concerned that souvenir hunters were spiriting away wrecked airplanes and other military artifacts from remote locations along the Aleutian chain, he formed the Alaskan Historical Aircraft Society in 1977 and began working to document, collect, and preserve World War II debris.

Orin Seybert, who founded PenAir and was flying in the Aleutians at the time, was pulled into the project.

"He wanted help in traveling out to the Aleutians and getting wrecked parts and stuff in here," Seybert said. "So I started out helping him with the museum in '78."

Forty-three years later, Seybert is still involved in the museum. He joined the board over 20 years ago, served as president for about five years, and is now on the board of trustees.

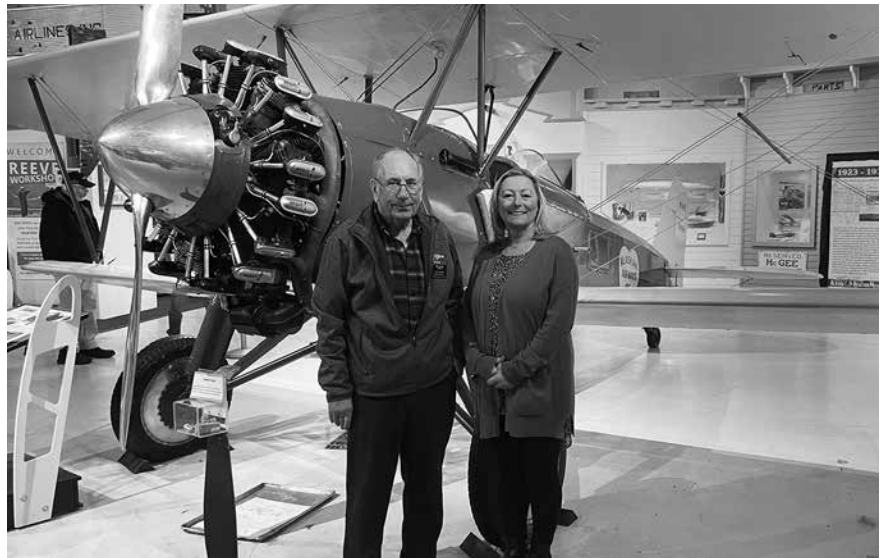
Alaska's military aviation history is just a small part of the story told in the museum, Seybert notes.

"There are over 200 communities in the state that have no road connection whatsoever, totally dependent on air service for all the transportation, mail, passengers, sick people. And that's what we as small airlines did in the Bush."

The museum includes five structures totaling over 31,000 square feet on four acres at Lake Hood, site of the busiest float plane base in the world.

In addition to the main museum building, there are two exhibit hangars, a hangar for aircraft restoration, and a large tent structure. More than 30 aircraft are on display, including:

- Remains of the *Seattle*, one of four Douglas World Cruisers that left Seattle in April 1924 on a U.S. Army Air Service mission to complete the first ever around-the-world flight. Two of the four biplanes that started the journey completed it 175 days later, but not the *Seattle*, which had



Alaska Aviation Museum trustee Orin Seybert and Phyllis Kilgore, executive director, with the 1928 Stearman biplane featured in the aircraft collection. In 1932 this plane was one of the first to land on Denali.

crashed into a mountain near Port Moller on the Alaska Peninsula.

- A Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighter jet that was shot down over Dutch Harbor by a Japanese Zero during the June 1942 bombing raid.

- The 1946 Taylorcraft that Seybert flew home to Pilot Point in 1954 after finishing high school in the Lower 48. The next year, Seybert started the business that became PenAir.

- An F-15 fighter jet on permanent loan from the U.S. Air Force.

- The Alaska Airlines 737-200 combi that made the historic Friendship Flight from Nome to Provideniya on June 13, 1988. The plane's airline seats have been removed and replaced by more comfortable seating that makes this jet, no longer in flying condition, an appealing rental for weddings or for corporate meetings.

The museum opens new exhibits every two or three years. Some current exhibits feature trailblazing Alaska pilots of the 1920s and '30s; women in World War II; World War II on Kiska; the fatal crash of Wiley Post and Will Rogers; and the history of Wein Alaska and Alaska Airlines.

Guests seem most intrigued by the exhibit on the 18-day Battle of Attu, according to Phyllis Kilgore, the museum's

executive director. Few have heard of this May 1943 battle in which the U.S. regained control of an Aleutian Island that Japanese forces had occupied for almost a year.

One of the newest exhibits tells the story of the Black Wolf Squadron, a 1920 U.S. Army Air Service mission to show that airplanes could cover great distances and aid national defense. Eight pilots flew four biplanes from New York to Nome.

The museum is self-sustaining, relying on income from three annual fundraising events, admission fees, gift shop sales, and facility rentals for events like weddings, birthday parties, and celebrations of life. There are four paid staff.

"For a long time, it was all volunteer," Seybert said. "We still rely on volunteers pretty heavily, particularly in the maintenance."

The museum offers something for everyone. "We have a kids' area with an interactive display where they can go in and fly this little airplane," Kilgore said. "We've got simulators that kids and adults both do."

The museum is open from 10am-5pm daily. Admission is \$17 for adults. Learn more at www.alaskaairmuseum.org.

—Carol Gales

SEWARD

Alaska Native boarding schools, cemeteries in focus following revelations in Canada

The recent discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia prompted U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to initiate an investigation of graves at Native American boarding schools throughout the U.S. There is increased attention to conditions and deaths at residential schools, including those attended by Alaska Natives. The Resurrection Bay Historical Society responded to an inquiry by a Seward resident by researching the history of Alaska Native children's education in Seward.

The Jesse Lee Home in Seward, built in 1925 by the Methodist Church, provided housing and schooling to Alaska Native orphans and children whose parents were unable to care for them. Starting



Jesse Lee Home, Seward. Courtesy Seward Historic Preservation Commission and City of Seward.

in 1930, children at the Jesse Lee Home attended grades 1-8 at the Bayview Territorial School, operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, while those in grades 9-12 attended Seward High School. Both the Jesse Lee Home and the Bayview School were closed in 1942 during World War II, and the facilities were made part of the adjacent Fort Raymond military base. Some of the JLH children went to Mt. Edgumbe in Sitka, where they stayed until the Seward home reopened in 1946.

Repeated flooding over the years at Eklutna Vocational School, another Alaska residential school, led the BIA to close that facility in 1945-1947 and send its students to Seward. About 200 Alaska Native children from Eklutna and 35 staff members moved into the vacant Bayview Territorial School and Army buildings at Fort Raymond. By comparison, only 170 students were enrolled in the Seward schools at the time.

The Seward Sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis opened in 1946 in the repurposed Army hospital at Fort Raymond. The patients, mainly Alaska Native, ranged in age from infants to the elderly. With contagious patients required to stay on campus, the facility also offered classes for young and old alike. School-age children followed the typical curriculum, while older patients received vocational courses.

The current interest in identifying graves of Native American children enrolled in boarding schools also inspired research on residential school cemeteries throughout the U.S. The Qutekcak Native Tribe in Seward, some of whose members lived at the Jesse Lee Home or are descended from home residents, has reached out to the Methodist Church to find grave records. Resurrection Bay Historical Society members are working to find other records, including death certificates. A nonprofit group from California, North of Hope, volunteered to clean up the Jesse Lee Home cemetery in Seward this summer. The enthusiastic work party cleared undergrowth and removed 15 trailer loads of debris.

KODIAK

Koniag and KANA donate land and facility to Alutiiq Museum in ceremony

In a joint transfer ceremony, regional Native corporation Koniag, Inc., and the Kodiak Area Native Association donated the land and facility that house the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository to the museum. The donation is intended to strengthen stewardship of Alutiiq cultural resources and allow the museum to focus on its critical work of preserving and sharing the heritage and living culture of the Alutiiq people. The Alutiiq Museum also has received an \$8 million award from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council to renovate its facility. April Counciller, the museum's executive director, said: "Kodiak and KANA's facility donations and the EVOS Trustee Council's generous grant will help the Alutiiq Museum realize its long held goal of expanding our gallery and collections space." The Museum plans to complete the renovation in 2023.

Kodiak explores impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Kodiak History Museum is researching and gathering material for a new exhibit entitled *Making History, Day by Day: Kodiak, Our Stories, and the Covid-19 Pandemic*. The exhibit is a reflection on the past 18 months in Kodiak, and will include many voices, images and mementoes of the pandemic.

FAIRBANKS

UA Press recognized for contributions to literacy

The Alaska Center for the Book recognized the good work of the University of Alaska Press with a 2021 Contributions to Literacy in Alaska (CLIA) awards. The selection committee members noted they were impressed by the staff who have struggled to keep the press afloat despite drastic budget cuts in recent years and expressed respect and admiration for the press's mission to publish critical books for Alaska. "From new authors to reprints of respected classics, from Alaska Native cultural literacy to literary journals, you provide an authentic gift to readers in Alaska and around the world," the Center said. The Center is a volunteer organization that serves as Alaska's liaison with the U.S. Library of Congress Center for the Book. Among its activities, it sponsors the UAA/Alaska Daily News creative writing contest, Alaska Book Week, and Alaska Native Heritage Month. More information can be found at www.alaskacenterforthebook.org.

Denali pioneer explorer statue in works

It's the final fundraising push by the Walter Harper Project Team working to place a life-size bronze statue of Harper, the Koyukon Athabaskan who was the first to stand atop Denali, in downtown Fairbanks next summer. The goal is to honor Harper as an inspirational figure as well as to acknowledge the teamwork of the first ascent of Denali in 1913. Project team members include Mike Harper, Johanna Harper, Bill Gordon, Mary Ehrlander, Dalene Bishop, Angie Linn, Tonya Kaquatosh and Diana Campbell. They selected Gary Lee Price as the sculptor and partnered with Design Alaska to do the landscaping, base for the statue, and several interpretive panels. A webpage, www.walterharper.org and a Facebook page have more information.

PALMER

Historians seeking Colony barns with stars

The Palmer Historical Society ran a picture of the Sjodin Colony Barn on tract 98, which is moving to tract 52. The barn's back wall is adorned with a star, evidently the trademark of the barn builder. The Lentz Colony Barn, now the Musk Ox Farm Colony Barn, also has a star. The Society is looking for other Colony barns with stars.

KETCHIKAN

Two notable women recognized in Ketchikan

Ketchikan Museums' September newsletter featured Mary A.C. Gibson, believed to be the first woman to run for statewide office in Alaska. Hailing from Ketchikan, Gibson ran as an independent candidate for the Territorial House in 1914, only a year after women citizens in the newly formed Alaska Territory were granted the right to vote. Her platform supported women's rights and fisheries issues, including denouncing fish traps. Mary's husband was a fish-



Marie (Eines) Hellyer on Pennock Island with her trusted camera, summer 1944. Photo courtesy Ketchikan Museums.

erman and Mary served as the secretary of the Ketchikan division of the Southeastern Alaska Fishermen's Association. In her 1914 campaign, she proposed legislation to close existing fish traps and prevent any in the future. Although Mary's campaign was popular, particularly in the fishing community, she did not win. It was not until 1937 that a woman, Nell Scott Chadwick, would serve in the

Territorial Legislature.

Ketchikan Museums' October newsletter highlighted Ketchikan resident Marie Eines Hellyer, an avid amateur photographer who began taking photos while she was in high school. Graduating from Kayhi (Ketchikan's high school) in 1941, Marie continued to capture slices of Ketchikan life. Recently Marie's daughter Margaret donated a collection of photos, most of them taken between the 1920s and the 1940s. Marie grew up in a Norwegian household on Millar Street, and many of her images are of family, neighbors and classmates. The photos give glimpses of fish traps, hikes on Deer Mountain and street scenes of the Newtown area.

History Aloud underway in Ketchikan

History Aloud, a collaboration between KRBD Community Radio and the Ketchikan Museums Oral History Program, began airing in October. The program explores threads of shared community through small snippets of life in Southeast Alaska. An on-line collection will be made available later.

JUNEAU

Letters of gratitude honor Dr. Walter Soboleff

Dr. Walter Soboleff (Tlingit) was an influential member of the Juneau community and throughout the state of Alaska. He served in many offices in the Alaska Native Brotherhood, taught Native Cultural Studies at UAF, served in the Alaska National Guard and was a pastor in the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Soboleff worked throughout his life to promote higher education, self-respect, spiritual values and equality. He encouraged others with recognition and kindness, often by sending handwritten notes and cards. To honor Dr. Soboleff, the Juneau-Douglas City Museum provided free note cards and stamps to anyone who wanted to write letters of encouragement and gratitude to important people in their life. The cards included an insert honoring Dr. Walter Soboleff (November 14, 1908 - May 22, 2011).



Dr. Walter Soboleff (1908-2011). Photo courtesy Juneau-Douglas City Museum.

Jackson Totem installed in State Office Building

In early November, the Áak'w Kwáan Wooshkeetaan, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Juneau-Douglas City Museum installed the Wooshkeetaan Kootéeyaa totem pole in the State Office Building atrium. The totem, carved by Master Carver Nathan Jackson, with assistance from artists Steve Brown and Dorica Jackson, was commissioned in 1980 as part of the Juneau Centennial commemoration. The totem is part of the museum's permanent collection. It was raised in front of Juneau's Centennial Hall in 1983 but taken down in 2016. Part of its permanent collection, the museum coordinated the installation of the totem in the state office building to have it in a space where the public can view it.

Sealaska Heritage Institute sponsors lecture series for Native American Heritage Month

The Sealaska Heritage Institute recognized Native American Heritage Month in November with a lecture series on Southeast Alaska Native history. The lectures were held in person at the SHI clan house and livestreamed on SHI's YouTube channel. Speakers covered topics ranging from Tlingit people's initial contacts with Europeans to Russian-Tlingit conflicts, Southeast Alaska Native education history, infectious diseases in colonial history, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, biographical presentations about William Lewis Paul and Elizabeth Peratrovich, the relationship between ANCSA corporations and Indian tribes and the place of ravens in American literary history. The November 23 lecture, "What's in a Name?" by Phillip Hesser tells the little-known story of an Alaska Native woman from Ft. Wrangell, Shik-Sha-Ni, who toured the country as "The Indian Girl" and met Harriet Tubman in the late 1880s in New York.

Juneau waterfront receives local focus

The *Gastineau Heritage News*, a publication of the Gastineau Channel Historical Society, focused on Juneau's waterfront in its Fall/Winter 2021 issue. Among other stories, the newsletter contains one with the headline "Fleet drove some onshore processing, but most Juneau canneries failed." Juneau's inadequate harbor was one of the challenges that impeded development. In the first years of the 20th century, the first fish processors on the Juneau waterfront produced salted or smoked halibut and salmon in barrels. Juneau did not host any canneries until 1918, when two were established. A third cannery was built on the Juneau waterfront in 1920, and two canneries also opened at Douglas in 1918. Within a few years, all but one Douglas cannery went under, and cold storage became the preferred means of processing. A cold storage facility, built in 1927, proved more durable than the earlier canneries; it operated for 74 years before it burned in 1987.



Juneau waterfront as seen from the water, circa 1897. Photo by Laroche, Seattle, courtesy Wikimedia.

LYNN CANAL

Eldred Rock Lighthouse preservation underway

The Eldred Rock Lighthouse Preservation Association is working to restore the lighthouse that stands at the north end of Lynn Canal. It was built in 1905 and is the oldest surviving octagonal frame lighthouse in the state. Last summer the group remediated asbestos from the kitchen and bathroom and removed lead paint. The group is fundraising for next year's projects that include repairs to the concrete and the lantern room, estimated to cost \$165,000. They planned to have a table at the Juneau Public Market the end of November and are organizing a virtual 5k race the first week of January. The group's goal is to have the lighthouse ready for visitors in 2023.

PETERSBURG

Restoring the Five Fingers Lighthouse

The Clausen Museum in Petersburg hosted an October event to benefit the Five Fingers Lighthouse Society, which is dedicated to restoring and sharing the history of one of the first two lighthouses constructed in Southeast Alaska. The Five Fingers Lighthouse was built in 1901, about 40 miles from Petersburg. In 1933, the original lighthouse burned down and was replaced by the current structure, built in 1935. It was both the first and the last lighthouse in Alaska to be staffed. According to the Society's website: "Scrawled on the underground walls of the structure are the names of the men who manned the light through winter storms, and written into the log books are their stories." The Society has repurposed the lighthouse as a scientific research station, artists retreat, museum, and home-away-from-home for lighthouse keepers. (<https://fivefingerlighthouse.com>)



Photo by Paul Sharpe, courtesy Five Fingers Lighthouse Society.

ANCHORAGE

Grant funds study of interred Japanese Americans

The Alaska chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League has received a funds-matching grant from the National Park Service to research and document the experience of Japanese Americans in Alaska during World War II. The study will cover not only what happened to these people during the war, but also their lives before and after the war. The project was initiated when archaeologist Morgan Blanchard discovered evidence of a WWII-era holding camp on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson where Alaska

residents of specific national origins had been incarcerated. According to records Blanchard recovered, 104 Japanese Americans were arrested in Alaska, along with 18 German Americans and five Italian Americans. Eventually half of the Germans were released, and all but one of the Italians, but none of the Japanese. The Japanese Americans were transferred to confinement sites in the Lower 48, most of them to Minidoka in Idaho.



From left to right, soldiers George Kimura, Sergeant Pat Hagiwara and Corporal Charlie Tatsuda, Japanese Americans from Alaska, sit in the Blackhawk Restaurant in Chicago, 1942. Ronald Inouye Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Some young Japanese American men from Alaska enlisted in the military, even as their families were in internment camps in the United States. Some of them served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Japanese regiment that served with distinction in the European theater of the war.

UAA/APU library receives federal grant to help address impacts of Covid

The UAA/APU Consortium Library Archives & Special Collections has received an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant intended to help close the “homework gap” created by closing schools the first months of the Covid pandemic. The grant is to create statewide guides to primary sources that are available at archives that can provide public access to the materials. The guides will be posted on the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED). Topics for the 16 guides to be created include the Permanent Fund Dividend, climate change, boundaries/surveying/mapping, aerial photos, geology, and journals/newspapers/broadcasting. Archivist Arlene Schmuland is seeking archives of individuals and organizations, and the guides will include corporate reports and newspaper coverage that are more widely available.

LOWER YUKON

1925-1926 flu epidemic records found

The Bureau of Indian Affairs’ ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection is a massive corpus of data produced by research to implement the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Kenneth L. Pratt used these

materials to provide an example of the collection’s rich content in an article in the Arctic Studies Center newsletter (No. 28, May 2021). Drawing on indigenous oral histories, the author discusses events related to a 1925 epidemic in two sites in Alaska’s Lower Yukon region: Tupicuar and Putukulek. One of Tupicuar’s former occupants was a female shaman named Tut’angaq, whose power reportedly came from a parka made out of seal intestines. A voice from the parka instructed Tut’angaq on how to cure a sick or injured person.

Tut’angaq was living at Tupicuar in 1925 when the flu appeared. Her husband and brother-in-law fell sick and died, and the survivors “buried” them by placing the bodies in kayaks, which were then folded in half. Tut’angaq left the site, moving to Putukulek the next year. More than a decade later in Putukulek, around 1939, Tut’angaq and her son folded a man’s body into a canoe and moved him to another part of the site before he could be buried. The article uses oral histories from the ANCSA 14(h)(1) collection to provide information about the little-known flu epidemic of 1925-1926. Not only does it shed light on how the indigenous residents of one part of the Lower Yukon region dealt with such events, but it also provides documentation of associated Native place and personal names and events.



FROM CANADA

Life histories of Gwich’in published

The Gwich’in Elders’ Biographies Research Project was conducted 1999-2001 by the Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute to record the life histories of Teet’it and Gwichya Gwich’in Elders associated with communities in the Northwest Territories in Canada, with many family connections to other Gwich’in in Yukon Territory and Alaska. In relating their histories, twenty-three Gwich’in elders shared their joy of living and traveling on the land. The Elders’ stories were published in 2020 by the University of Alberta Press in a book entitled *Our Whole Gwich’in Way of Life Has Changed/Gwich’in K’yuu Gwiidandai’ Tthak Ejuk Goonlih: Stories from the People of The Land* by Leslie McCartney and Gwich’in Tribal Council.

Wreck of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear located

NOAA Ocean Exploration and a multi-agency team found the remains of a vessel off the coast of Nova Scotia that turned out to be the wreck of the Revenue Cutter *Bear*. The *Bear* patrolled Alaska and Arctic waters for 41 years, for nine of those captained by the legendary Mike Healy. After its Arctic service, the *Bear* continued to be used in military and civilian roles. The ship sank in 1963, while being towed to Philadelphia to become a museum and restaurant. Its final resting place was unknown until the ship was found this year.

Society recognizes 10 Alaskans, groups for outstanding contributions to history

Ten Alaskans and Alaska organizations were recognized by the Alaska Historical Society for their outstanding contributions to the study of Alaska history during the final weekend of the Society's six-day annual virtual conference in October. The awards include:

EVANGELINE ATWOOD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

is given to an individual for significant long-term contributions to Alaska history.

Joan Skilbred of Fairbanks was recognized for "decades of extraordinary energy and prodigious research skills toward uncovering and disseminating Alaska history." Her topics have included the significance of logging in early Fairbanks, contributions of pioneer women and early African-American gold miners in Interior Alaska.

ELVA R. SCOTT LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARD

recognizes an historical society or museum for its programs, publications or a significant recent accomplishment.

Two organizations received this year's award: the **Cook Inlet Historical Society** and the **Anchorage Museum**. They coordinated the production of eight on-line lectures during Covid restrictions when most in-person events were cancelled. One program recreated the 1921 Anchorage Festival of Music concert to honor the organization's centennial and another proposed a resolution to the infamous unsolved murder of Anchorage's first police chief, John Sturgus. Rebecca Pottebaum at the Museum and Bruce Parham with the Society received special recognition.

ESTHER BILLMAN AWARD *is given to a society, museum, government agency or organization contributing to the preservation and understanding of Alaska history during the past year.*

This year's winner is the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** of Juneau for its excellent newsletter, *Gastineau Heritage News*. The society compiled a remarkable and comprehensive history of Juneau-Douglas breweries, tracking brewing to the 1700s when Russians introduced liquor to the Aleutian Islands, summarized the ever-changing liquor laws and public sentiment, and introduced the thriving craft brewing industry. Newsletter editor Laury Scandling and President Gary Gillette are recognized for outstanding work.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALASKA HISTORY AWARD

recognizes individuals or groups for projects, publications and other efforts that have significantly promoted and added to understanding Alaska history. Three awards were made this year:

- **Irene Sparks Rowan** of Anchorage for her work to preserve and share the history of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.
- Alaska journalist and author **Dermot Cole** of Fairbanks for his commitment to journalism to which he brings a deep historical perspective, his contributions to Alaska history through publication of six books and his courage to ask tough questions of public figures.

• **J. Pennelope Goforth** of Anchorage for many years as a researcher and writer and for her impassioned advocacy for Alaska history, especially Alaska's maritime history which she has been researching at least since the 1980s.

TERRENCE M. COLE STUDENT AND BEGINNING PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Society has annually given Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards to help individuals attend and participate in the Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska annual meetings and conference. The Society's Board of Directors recently voted to rename this the Terrence M. Cole Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards, to recognize the contributions of the late UAF Professor Terrence Cole.

The recipient this year is **Lauren Peters**, a doctoral student in Native American Studies at the University of California Davis. Lauren presented at the Society's conference this year on "Sophia's Return," about a girl from St. Paul Island who was orphaned and sent in 1895 to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania where she died. This past summer, Sophia's remains were returned to St. Paul Island.

BEST ARTICLE *The editorial advisory board members of the Society's journal, Alaska History, make an award for the best article that appeared in the last volume of the journal. Morgan and Jeanie Sherwood endowed this award and the recipient receives \$500.*

This year's award goes to **Robert L. Spude** for his article "Fairbanks Assayer Gustave Eugene Beraud and 88 Tons of Gold, with Comments on the Assayers in the Alaska-Yukon Goldfields, 1898-1920," in the spring 2020 edition of the journal.

THE BEAVER LOG AWARD *is presented by the Society president to an individual for outstanding contributions.*

President William Schneider selected **David Ramseur** of Anchorage for editing the Society's quarterly newsletter and helping with the organization's advocacy efforts.

In search of a great gift idea?

A perfect gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. Your gift includes our quarterly newsletter and journal *Alaska History*, and supports important activities and programs.

It's easy! Visit www.alaskahistorical society.org and click on "membership and giving."



AHS announces new board, officers

At the Alaska Historical Society's annual business meeting in October, results of the election of five members to serve on the Board of Directors were announced.

Incumbents Patuk Glenn, Rachel Mason, Angie Schmidt and Will Schneider were reelected and Averil Lerman was elected. Tim Troll was thanked for his six years of service on the Board.

The following day the 2021-22 Board of Directors elected officers: David Ramseur, president; Rachel Mason, vice-president; Angie Schmidt, secretary; and Erik Johnson, treasurer. After the meeting, Anastasia Tarmann resigned from the Board and President Ramseur appointed Wendy Ranney of Cordova to complete her term.

If any members are interested in serving on a committee, please send an email to members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org. Ideas for a theme and keynote speaker for the 2022 conference and for special initiatives the Society should undertake are welcome.

The Society's annual report should be posted on the AHS website by the end of December.

Author offers book discount to members

Member Art Petersen has made a generous offer to fellow Alaska Historical Society members.

He is offering a 40% discount on his recently published book *Promised Lands, Mollie Walsh: An Irish American Story*, as well as his other Klondike Research publications.

The books can be ordered with the discount at www.klondikeresearch.com. In the "Your Inquiry" section, enter "As a member of the Alaska Historical Society, I would like a copy of . . ." A response will be sent with price, shipping and payment options.

The promotional material on *Promised Lands* notes: "At its center is the story of a woman in the West and North, the grit and discipline she exercised to claim her land of promise, and the events that led to her being robbed of it and everything. Others like and unlike Mollie appear in this story of humanity in search of promised lands."

Thank you, Art!

Christmas on the Klondike Trail, 1898

By ANNA DEGRAF

Christmas on the trail to the Klondike could be somber and lonely. The cold, the dark, and the hundreds of miles separating gold rushers from their families weighed heavily on the men and women so far from home. They looked to their own fellowship to make the best of it.

Anna DeGraf was on the trail in the Yukon in December 1898. This hardy woman had come north to join in the excitement and opportunity of the rush and to enjoy the land she had spent several years in earlier in the 1890s. To help lug her supplies, she had hired two "boys;" it is hard to tell how old the "boys" might have been, since at age 59 herself, DeGraf called almost every man on the trail a "boy." It turned out she was sturdier than the boys, and found herself one day urging her exhausted helpers to one final effort to reach the shelter of a cabin. They arrived on Christmas Eve. Here is her story of that Christmas.



"Boys," I said, "It's just a little farther. Around this next bend is Lake Marsh, I know it is! I have been there before, and I remember it well. Just around the bend! Come, get up, and make one more effort to get that far."

But they would not budge; they said they could not go any farther. I hoped I was telling the truth, and I trudged on wearily and prayed constantly, and sure enough, when I got around the bend I saw the lights of Lake Marsh.

Oh, how I called and shouted to them to make them understand. At last they dragged themselves up and stumbled toward me. When they saw the lights, it put new heart into them, and we tramped on until we came to the first cabin, and rapped at the door. It was opened by a man who held a light above his head and peered out into the darkness, and then cried,

"Why, it's the lady who camped

beside us at Lake Lindemann!"—and sure enough I remembered him. We were hardly inside the cabin before he began to tell us how homesick he and his son were. I spied two bunks, and without ceremony climbed into the top one and said, "Here I stay until I get rested. Will you have room to keep the boys and me all night?"

They were glad to do it, for they were so lonely.

"We have a Christmas cake," one of them said, "and you shall have supper, with coffee and cake."

After supper I had Johnnie [one of her boys] get out his trombone and play "Still is the night, holy the night," and we joined in singing. By and by we heard some one outside the cabin singing, and then some one else, and when we opened the door we found the men from the other tents in that little settlement, drawn together by the music. We left the door open, and we all sang together the different hymns and songs we could think of. I shall never forget that night! All those souls so lonely, and thinking of home and loved ones! Some of them broke down and cried, they were so homesick. But it made them feel better, to sing—and to cry. It was a wonderful, clear night, the stars were so bright and seemed so near, and we sang our hymns in the wilds of the Yukon, for even in that far country we did not forget, "Still is the night, holy the night!"

It was very late when everybody finally went away, and we lay down to sleep. In the morning the whole camp came again. They heard our story, we all sang some more, and when, after we had our Christmas dinner, we started on our way, they walked with us a few miles before they said goodbye.

For Anna DeGraf's account of her experiences in the Yukon and in Alaska, see her book: Pioneering on the Yukon, 1892-1917 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1992).

AN ODDMENT

Future Machine: The Horner Alaska Auto Sleigh

In 1916, Frank G. Horner of Ruby had an idea. He was tired of tramping across Alaska with three sizes of snowshoes for different snow conditions. And he was tired of feeding and harnessing teams of dogs to carry freight long distances. Instead he invented a mechanical sled to master what he called The Basic Laws of Over the Snow Transport. The frame was made of hickory spars bound with rawhide thongs (which remained flexible at low temperatures), and below, narrow runners, two sets of wheels, and a wide propulsion belt contacted the snow. The sled was powered by a four-cylinder engine, and steering involved an adjustable metal disk at the front.

In 1919, during testing of a prototype in Washington's Snoqualmie Pass, Horner's friends were surprised that the sled sped along at fifteen miles an hour and managed to climb over a tree that had fallen across the snow-covered highway. Later tests over Alaska's rough terrain proved less promising, and the dream of replacing dogs for freight and postal delivery stalled. Horner was not the first or the last Alaskan to tackle the problem of snow travel, but he was one of the most persistent. In 1956, he wrote to the University of Alaska offering to teach snow vehicle science and to donate his blueprints and a scale model of the auto sleigh to the school. President Ernest Patty politely declined.

The first commercially available snow-machine—the Polaris Sno-Traveler—debuted in 1957.

—Chris Allan

ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

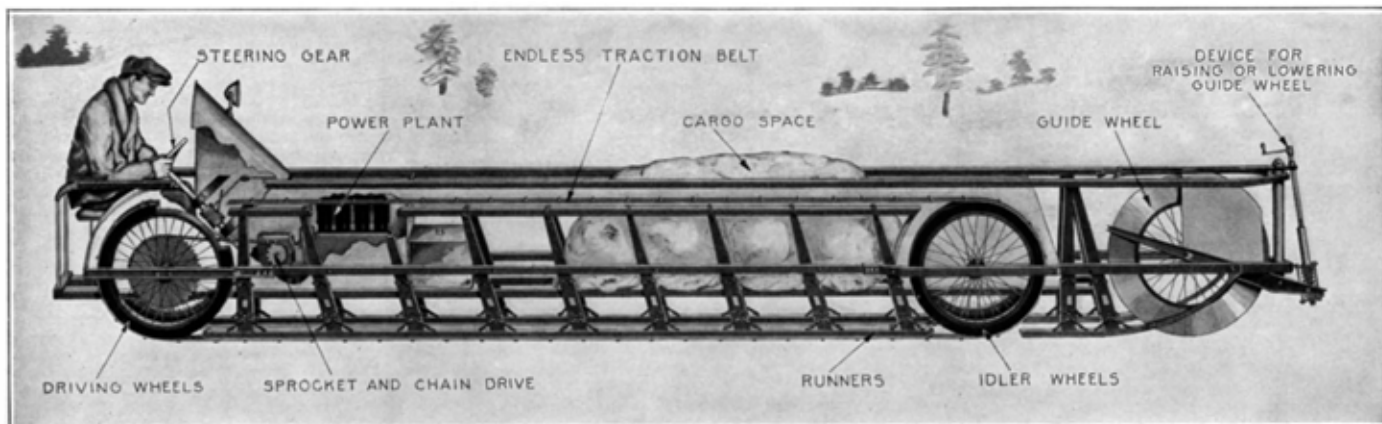
P.O. Box 100299

Anchorage, AK 99510-0299

Non-profit
organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 69
Anchorage, AK



"Christmas Party at ANB Hall at Hoonah Presbyterian church that burned down."
Alaska State Library, P55-026, Kayamori Photo Collection, ca. 1912-1941.



"The Motor Sled Versus the Dog Sled," Scientific American 124 (January 29, 1921), 85.